

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 942

By Naifeh

A RESOLUTION to congratulate radio station WKBL-AM in Tipton County as it prepares to celebrate the anniversary of 50 years of service to listeners in Tipton County and the surrounding area.

WHEREAS, on August 16, 1954, at the flip of a switch, radio station WKBL-AM was born in Covington; the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) assigned call letters were "W" for its location east of the Mississippi River, "K" for Ken, "B" for Bill and "L" for Louise, for original owners Ken Sparks and Bill and Louise Hoffman, organized as the Tipton County Broadcasting Company; and

WHEREAS, the station presents coverage of local events, local sports coverage, live musical acts and news and weather along with it's deejay programming; there is great rapport with the listener base which tunes in at their homes and in their cars, and many listeners recognize the station personality voices when they hear them in person at a local business or other location; and

WHEREAS, on July 3, 1957 the FCC granted a permit of transfer to Robert C., Jr. and Katherine Whiteley who organized as Tipton County Broadcasters; the Whiteleys owned the station until 1982 and had as their mainstay live programming including most mornings devoted to preachers, both black and white, and singing groups, many of whom were brought in by long-time employee Lawrence "The Man" Hall, who has been with the station from its beginning; the Whiteleys brought in a number of deejays to join Lawrence Hall, including Jerry Butler, Bob Bromley, Lynn Huggins, Geo Klein, Bill Black, Dave Stuart, and many more; and

WHEREAS, in 1982, WKBL was sold to employee Royce Wilson, and six years later the station moved from the old Roper Drug building where it had been located since 1954 to the transmitter site on Highway 51 North; Mr. Wilson made numerous improvements and modernizations to the facility and its operations and ran it until 1999 when he decided to sell the



station and its sister station, WKBL-FM to the owners of KBJ-TV, organized as Covington Broadcasting, Inc.; and

WHEREAS, Bob Lakey, Jerol Hopkins, Keith Phelps, and Sammy Beasley have been partners as owners of KBJ-V since 1988; after acquiring WKBL-AM in April 1999, they set about spending hundreds of thousands of dollars to update the facilities to state of the art, computer automation, and the broadcasts; the FM sister station reaches 45 to 50 miles out and is heard in parts of Arkansas and occasionally in parts of Missouri and is the only FM station carrying Memphis Tiger basketball; and

WHEREAS, WKBL-AM's current offering is classic country music, under station manager "Handsome" Jimmy Hicks and with news director Justin Hanson, and Lawrence "The Man" Hall is still heard each weekend; over its half-century of service the station has aired country and gospel music, has broadcast numerous talkathons for charitable causes, provided coverage of local sporting events, and aired University of Tennessee football and St. Louis Cardinal baseball games; and

WHEREAS, WKBL-AM's record of service comes as a part of the Memphis radio market, where there are 40 radio stations serving a listenership that grew up with the knowledge that their region saw the birth of the blues and rock 'n' roll; the ability to compete in such an environment is testament to the station's success is gauging the wishes of their listeners and their community; and

WHEREAS, the station is planning several special events for its 50th anniversary, including a program featuring some of the old advertising jingles and other miscellaneous offerings from the station's past and is seeking memorabilia and the participation of former on-air personalities and employees; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly specially recognize this vibrant station that over the years has grown with its community and has consistently provided a valuable public service in the "public interest"; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we hereby congratulate radio station WKBL-AM in Tipton County on the

approaching celebration of its 50th anniversary on the air, and commend its owners and employees, both current and past, on an exemplary half-century of broadcasting in the "public interest."

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.